

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 233207 TOSEC 270430

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, SW

SUBJ: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
DEFEATED

1. SUMMARY: OLOF PALME'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SUFFERED A SURPRISINGLY LARGE DEFEAT IN PARLIMENTARY ELECTIONS SEPTEMBER 19. THE CAMPAIGN WAS FOUGHT AND DECIDED ON DOMESTIC ISSUES, THE AREA WHERE A NEW NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONCENTRATE IN MAKING ITS MARK. FOREIGN POLICY WILL REMAIN ESSENTIALLY THE SAME, WITH SHADINGS IN STYLE AND TONE WHICH SHOULD REDUCE RHETORICAL IRRITANTS TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS, COMMENTATORS PREDICTED A PHOTO FINISH. THE 180 SEATS GAINED BY THE NON-SOCIALISTS (COMPARED TO 169 FOR THE LEFT), THUS, CONSTITUTED A SURPRISINGLY
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LARGE SWEDISH VOTE FOR CHANGE. THE IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN

ISSUES WERE EXCLUSIVELY DOMESTIC: THE RATE OF TAX INCREASES; GREATER WORKER CONTROL OF INDUSTRY; AND WHETHER NUCLEAR POWER IN SWEDEN. CENTRIST PARTY LEADER THORBJORN FALLDIN, CALLED FOR DISMANTELING SWEDEN'S FIVE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, AND CANCELLING PLANS FOR THIRTEEN OTHERS. THOUGH FALLDIN'S LIBERAL AND MODERATE COLLABORATORS DID NOT AGREE WITH THE PROPOSAL, PALME IDENTIFIED IT AS THE REASON FOR HIS DEFEAT. A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUE IS POSSIBLE.

3. PALME IS EXPECTED TO RESIGN TODAY OR TOMORROW. THE CENTRISTS (WITH 24 OF THE VOTE), MODERATES (18) AND LIBERALS (11) ARE ALREADY DISCUSSING THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN FORTY-FOUR YEARS. THIS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL BE LED BY THE CENTER PARTY WITH FALLDIN AS PRIME MINISTER. THOUGH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WILL REMAIN AS CARETAKER UNTIL ITS SUCCESSOR IS INSTALLED (NOT BEFORE OCTOBER 8), IT SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON WILL COME TO NEW YORK FOR THE UNGA.

4. DURING THE CAMPAIGN FALLDIN EMPHASIZED CONTINUITY IN SWEDISH FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SPEAKING TO 200 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS LAST WEEK, HE STATED THAT ALL DOMESTIC PARTIES IN SWEDEN AGREED WITH SWEDEN'S FOREIGN POLICY. HE SAID THAT SWEDEN WOULD CONCENTRATE HER EFFORTS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, BUT THAT BILATERAL HUMANITARIAN AID WOULD CONTINUE, INCLUDING TO COUNTRIES WITH ACTIVE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. WITH THE EXIT OF PALME, HOWEVER, SWEDEN'S FOREIGN POLICY IS LIKELY TO BE LESS STRIDENT AND LESS ACTIVE. SWEDISH FOSTERING OF THE PLO WILL LIKELY DIMINISH, AND NEW FOREIGN AID WILL PROBABLY BE DISTRIBUTED ON LESS IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS. THOUGH SWEDEN'S POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT IN PEACE AND NEUTRALITY IN WAR WILL BE UNAFFECTED, THE STRIDENT ESPOSAL OF THIRD WORLD CAUSES WILL PROBABLY BE TEMPERED. THIS SHOULD MINIMIZE RHETORICAL IRRITANTS AND IMPROVE THE TONE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

5. FALLDIN IS DESCRIBED AS A PIPE-SMOKING, GOD-FEARING SHEEP FARMER. IN FACT HE RUNS A SMALL FARM AND KEEPS A HERD OF 150 SHEEP. HIS INTERESTS FOCUS PRIMARILY ON INTERNAL SWEDISH ISSUES--AND HE HAS IN THE PAST BEEN IMPATIENT WITH PALME'S PENCHANT FOR TELLING OTHERS HOW TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HANDLE THEIR AFFAIRS IN DISTANT PLACES. AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS PROVED HIMSELF A CLEVER TACTICIAN AND A HEAVY-WEIGHT ON DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. HE WILL NEED THESE ATTRIBUTES IN MOLDING AND HOLDING TOGETHER A COALITION, WHOSE PRINCIPAL COMMON THEME THUS FAR HAS BEEN OPPOSITION TO THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT. EVEN THOUGH THE NON-SOCIALISTS HAVE TO DATE DISAGREED AS OFTEN AS THEY HAVE AGREED, THE RISK OF NEW ELECTIONS IS AN IMPORTANT INCENTIVE FOR THEM TO ACT TO-

GETHER TO DENY PALME'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY
TO RETURN TO POWER . ROBINSON

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